

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION ON STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: This study sought to determine the influence parental level of education on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. Concurrent research design of mixed methods methodology was used. The target population comprised of 250 principals, 380 Form 4 class teachers, 250 PA chair persons and 108 area chiefs. The sample size included 50 principals, 76 class teachers, 50 PA chairpersons and 20 chiefs, making a total of 196 research participants. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis were used for data collection. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analyses and presented using frequency tables and graphs. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically and presented using narratives and appropriate verbatim quotes. Descriptive statistics used were mainly mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics used were both correlation and regression analyses. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine association /correlation between parental level of education and students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. Bivariate regression was used to determine the influence of parental level of education on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The study established that parental level of education had positive and significant influence on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. Thus, the study concluded that parental level of education is a significant family-based determinant of students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study recommended that school administrators and local authorities should increase sensitization campaigns targeting to enlighten parents / guardians on the importance of education. It was also recommended that public day secondary schools should have a well- staffed guidance and counseling departments to sensitize students on the need for staying focused in learning.

Keywords: parental level of education, Students' Participation, Public Day Secondary Schools, Makueni County, Kenya.

I. INTRODUCTION

Parental level of education means the highest educational level that has been attained by the parent who lives with the child. The level can be; primary level, secondary level or tertiary level. Parental level of education is a major factor in determining students' enrollment, attendance and completion (Shumow et al 2004). Educated parents better understand their role and responsibilities in their children's education and therefore they are always active in participating in their educational

activities in school and at home (Yamamoto & Hallway, 2010). A study in South-Eastern Europe carried out by Radiu (2011), revealed that parent's level of education created a feeling of competence, capableness and adequacy towards commitment and involvement in their children's learning activities.

Muhammad (2015) revealed that educated parents to a greater extent have more influence on their children's participation and performance in school. The study further established that parents with higher level of education show a lot of interest and care in their children's learning activities and their choice of subjects and careers while in secondary schools.

Santhiyappan (2019) concluded that there exist a positive correlation between parents' educational level and the students' academic performance. Onyedikachin & Ezekiel –Hart (2021) did a study on the influence of educational level of parents on students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Arabia State. From the study it was concluded that there exist a positive correlation between parents' educational level and the students' academic performance.

Amuda & Domiya (2016) did a study on Parents' Level of Education as Predictor of Academic Performance of Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) Students of College of Education in the North Eastern States of Nigeria. The study findings showed that education level of parents was not a significant predictor of academic performance among the NCE students in the North- Eastern states of Nigeria.

Munyalo (2017) conducted a study on Parent-Related Factors Influencing Learners' Academic Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Igembe North Sub-County, Kenya. From the results, it was noted that parents with higher educational achievements had a lot of concern in their children's learning activities and provided academic guidance and motivation to their school age children. It was also concluded that there exist a strong positive relationship between parents' educational achievements and students' participation and performance in education.

Free Day Secondary Education (FDSE) was officially launched in Kenya by the late President Mwai Kibaki in 2008. This was done because after introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, many primary graduates could not get access to secondary education. FDSE programme was launched so that learners who enroll in form 1 would participate wholly in education and graduate after 4 years. However, the case is totally different in Makueni County. The data obtained from Makueni County Education Office between the years 2016 -2021 shows that; In 2019, a total of 4,891 students did not complete form 4 accounting for 16.94% of students who either dropped out or repeated. In 2020 a total of 3,731 students did not complete form 4 accounting for 12.98% of students who either dropped out or repeated. Also in 2021, a total of 3,674 students did not complete form 4 accounting for 12.38% of students who either dropped out or repeated. In Makueni County, most households are poor and most parents have low educational attainments (KNBS Makueni County, 2020) and hence parental level of education play a big role in students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. Therefore, it was vital to conduct a study to establish the influence of parental level of education on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County Kenya.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study was guided by the following specific objective;

I) To establish the influence of parental level of education on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mixed Methods research methodology specifically concurrent research design was used in this study. The study targeted 250 public day secondary schools and 108 locations (KNBS MAKUENI COUNTY, 2020). Therefore, 250 principals, 380 form 4 class teachers (2022), 250 PTA chair persons and 108 area chiefs were targeted. Random sampling was used to select 20% of the principals, form 4 class teachers and PA chair persons from the schools in each sub-county and 20% of area chiefs from locations in each sub-county. Therefore, sample size consisted of 50 principals, 76 form 4 class teachers (2022), 50 PA chair persons and 20 area chiefs making a total of 196 participants. Questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis were used to collect data in this study.

IV. RESULTS

Parental Level of Education

The study sought to establish the influence of parental level of education on students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The parental level of education in the sampled schools was first determined.

Education Level of Majority of the Parents in the School

The principals and Form 4 class teachers were asked to indicate the education level achieved by the majority of the parents in their schools. Their responses are presented in Figure 1.

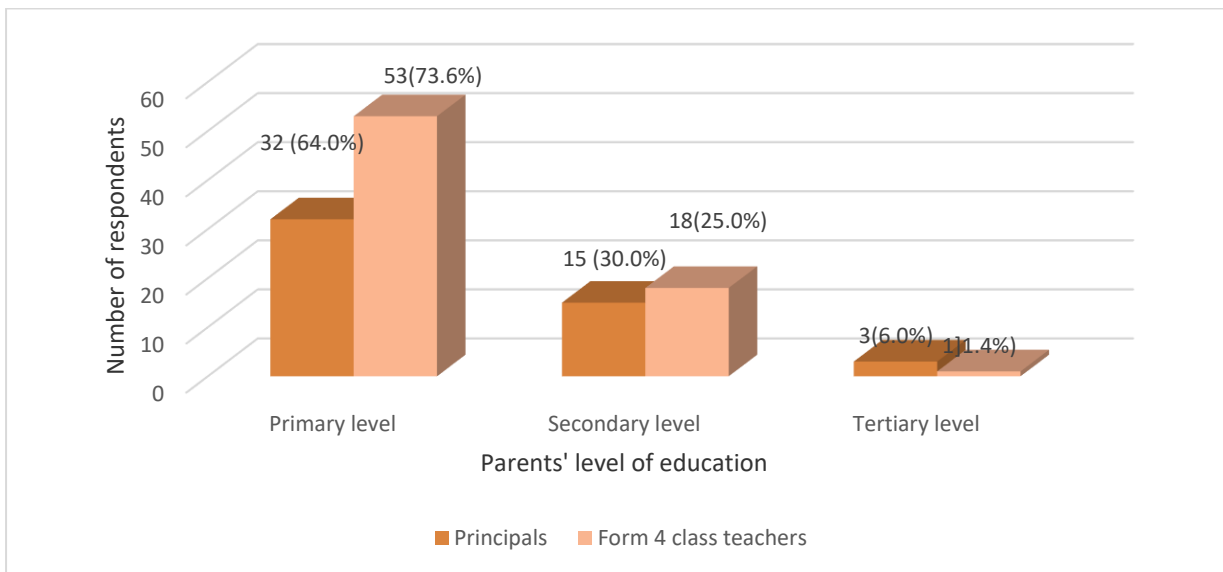


Figure 1: Education Level of the Majority of the Parents in the Sampled Schools

Looking at the results displayed in Figure 1, it was evident that majority of the principals (64.0%) and Form 4 class teachers (73.6%) stated that the majority of the parents in their schools had attained primary level education. The findings also showed that a considerable number of parents in the sampled schools had secondary education while a lower percentage had attained tertiary level education.

The majority of the interviewed PA chairpersons, 33 (66.0%) indicated that most parents in their schools had primary level education while the rest indicated secondary level education. Some of the PA chairpersons who asserted that most parents in their schools had primary level education explained that, “Primary level, in this school, very few parents have Form 4 certificate.” PA Chairperson 16 ... “Primary level. This school is situated in an interior location and hence, parents are not exposed” PA Chairperson 18 ... “Primary level. We face challenges when choosing PA representatives since Form 4 certificate is required” PA Chairperson 28 ... “Primary level. This has led to majority of the parents not consulting with teachers to know progress of the students” PA Chairperson 32 ... ‘Primary level. Only very few parents have attained secondary education” PA Chairperson 34 ... “Majority are primary school graduates. Therefore, they are straining to have their children attain secondary level education” PA Chairperson 49.

From the above responses, it can be concluded that most parents in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County had primary level education.

Measures of Parental Level of Education

The principals and Form 4 class teachers reacted to four (4) items in the parental level of education construct where they indicated the extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements based on a five-point Likert scale. Table 1 contains principals’ responses.

Table 1: Principals’ Responses on Measures of Parental Level of Education

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Most parents in this school have basic formal education	12.00%	20.00%	16.00%	42.00%	10.00%	3.180	1.224
Most parents in this school have the intellectual capacity to support their children to be comfortable and to adjust to their learning development	4.00%	48.00%	16.00%	28.00%	4.00%	2.800	1.030

Most parents in this school understand better the proper educational resources/materials needed by their children	10.00%	30.00%	38.00%	20.00%	2.00%	2.740	0.965
Most parents in this school have the basic knowledge and skills needed in guiding and counselling their children in their learning activities	22.00%	40.00%	16.00%	18.00%	4.00%	2.420	1.144
Composite Mean and Standard Deviation						2.785	0.537
Valid N=50							

On average, as shown in Table 1, the principals held a neutral view regarding whether most parents in their schools had basic formal education and whether the parents had the intellectual capacity to support their children to be comfortable and to adjust to their learning development as revealed by the means of responses of 3.180 and 2.800 respectively. The principals also on average neither agreed nor disagreed that most parents in their schools understood better the proper educational resources/materials needed by their children given a mean value of 2.740. Further, the principals disagreed that most parents in their schools had the basic knowledge and skills needed in guiding and counselling their children in their learning activities as depicted by the mean value of 2.420. The composite mean value of 2.785 was an indication that on average, the sampled principals held a neutral view on the statements presented as measures of parental level of education in public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The responses of the sampled Form 4 class teachers are outlined in Table 2

Table 2: Form 4 Class Teachers' Responses on Measures of Parental Level of Education

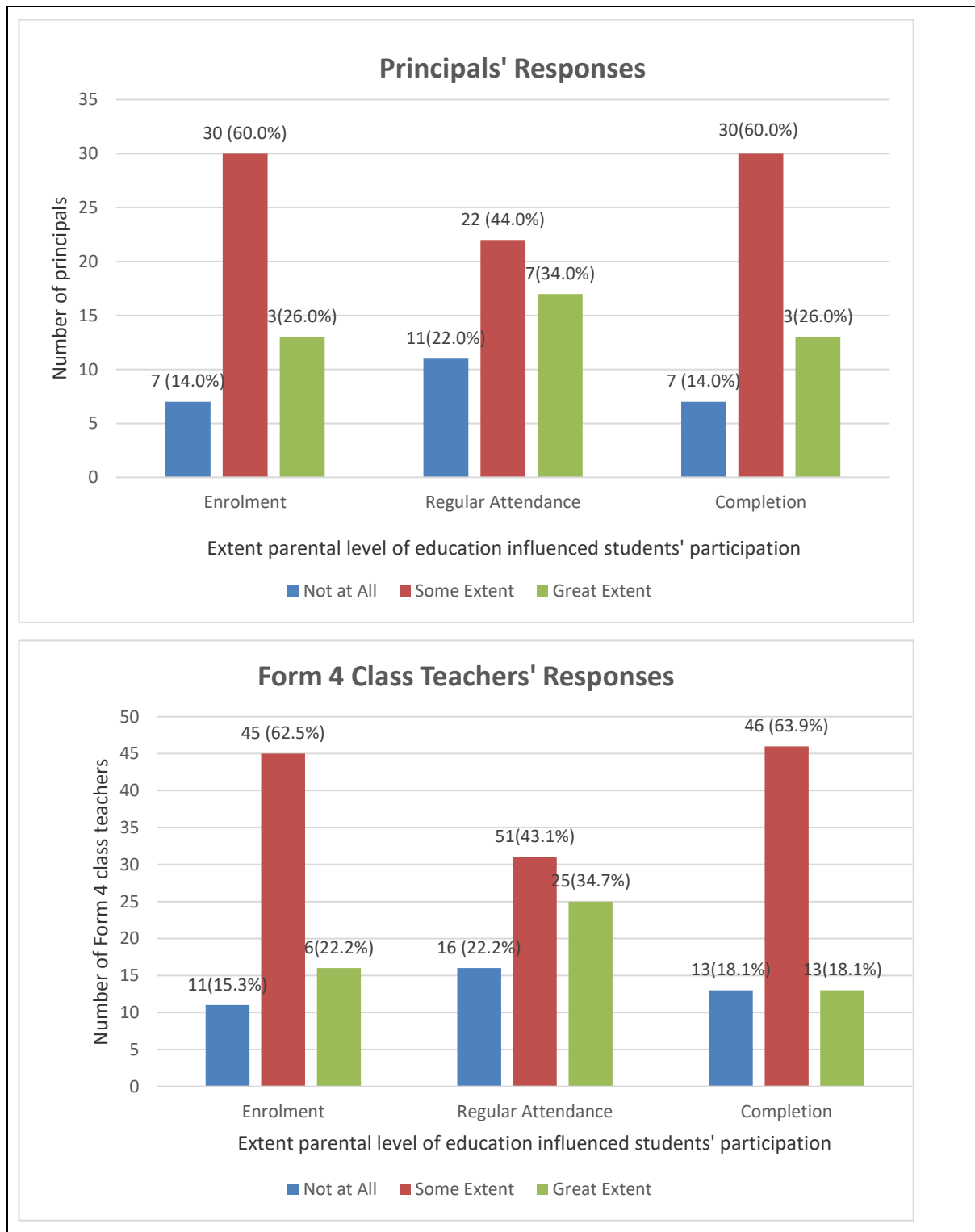
Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Most parents in this school have basic formal education	6.90%	30.60%	15.30%	43.10%	4.20%	3.069	1.092
Most parents in this school have the intellectual capacity to support their children.	4.20%	31.90%	37.50%	26.40%	0.00%	2.861	0.861
Most parents in this school understand better the proper educational materials needed by their children	9.70%	37.50%	34.70%	12.50%	5.60%	2.667	1.007
Most parents in this school have the basic knowledge and skills needed in guiding and counselling their children in their learning activities	19.40%	45.80%	11.10%	23.60%	0.00%	2.389	1.056
Composite Mean and Standard Deviation						2.747	0.501
Valid N=72							

From Table 2, it was concluded that on average, the Form 4 class teachers as well held a neutral view regarding to whether most parents in their schools had basic formal education, whether these parents had the intellectual capacity to support their children to be comfortable and to adjust to their learning development and whether the parents understood better the proper educational resources/materials needed by their children as illustrated by the mean values of 3.069, 2.861 and 2.667 respectively. The findings also showed that these sampled Form 4 class teachers on average disagreed that most parents in their schools had the basic knowledge and skills needed in guiding and counselling their children in their learning activities as demonstrated by the mean value of 2.389. The overall mean value of 2.747 suggested that on average, the sampled Form 4 class teachers held a neutral view regarding the statements presented on parental level of education.

Perceived Link between Parental Level of Education and Students' Participation

The study further sought the respondents' views regarding whether parental level of education influenced students' participation in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County in terms of enrolment, regular attendance and completion of studies. The principals' and Form 4 class teachers' responses are as provided in Figure 2

Figure 2: Parental Level of Education and Enrolment, Regular School Attendance and Completion of Studies



The study results displayed in Figure 2 showed that majority of the principals, 60.0%, noted that parental level of education to some extent influenced students' enrolment and their completion of studies in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County. The larger proportion of the principals, 44.0%, also asserted that the students' regular school attendance in these schools was to some extent influenced by parental level of education. The responses of the Form 4 class teachers were consistent with the principals' views where the greater proportion, 62.5%, 43.1% and 63.9% of them, observed that parental level of education to some extent influenced student enrolment, regular school attendance and completion of studies in the sampled public day secondary schools in Makueni County.

The analysis of the PA chairpersons' responses showed that majority of them, 62.0% and 86.0%, argued that student enrolment and regular attendance in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County were to a great extent influenced by parental level of education. A larger proportion of these PA chairpersons, 46.0%, indicated that completion of studies among students in these schools was influenced to a great extent by parental level of education. Some of their responses are quoted as follows, *"Majority of parents who do not take their children to high school are educated up to the primary level"* PA Chairperson 38 ... *"Yes, very much, students who have not enrolled in secondary schools are from parents who are illiterate (not attained secondary level)"* PA Chairperson 40 ... *"Yes, very much. Parents with low level of education cause their children to be absent from school with no remarkable reason"* PA Chairperson 24 ... *"Yes, most of the students whose attendance and completion are affected, are parents who have attained primary level education"* PA Chairperson 26 ... *"To a very great extent. Some are given responsibilities instead of going to school, for example, herding cattle"* PA Chairperson 32 ... *"Yes, due to low academic level of parents some students drop out of school and they do not question them"* PA Chairperson 30

From the interviews with area chiefs, majority of them, 75.0% and 90.0%, stated that parental level of education to a great extent influenced student enrolment and regular school attendance in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County. A considerable number of the area chiefs, 55.0%, noted that parental level of education also influenced students' completion of studies to a great extent in the said schools. Further analysis showed that 7 (35.0%) of the area chiefs observed that there were some learners in their communities who left or dropped out of school before completing Form 4 due to low parental level of education. The above findings indicated that generally, parental level of education was perceived to influence students' participation in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County.

V. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

It was discovered that majority of the parents in the public day secondary schools in Makueni County had primary level education. The study noted that on average, most of these parents had moderate intellectual capacity to support their children's learning development and understanding of the suitable educational materials needed by their children. On the contrary, most of the parents in the mentioned schools were believed to lack the basic knowledge and skills needed in guiding and counseling their children in their learning activities. In line with this observation, Muhamad (2015) argued that parents with higher academic qualifications have more influence on their children's participation and performance. It was also established that student enrolment, regular school attendance and completion of studies in public day secondary schools in Makueni County were to some extent influenced by parental level of education. For instance, it was noted that parents who had not gone to secondary schools were likely not to enroll their children to such schools, others encouraged absenteeism for no solid reasons, other parents also forced their children to engage in responsibilities such as cattle herding while others did not question their children when they escaped or dropped out of school. Such findings were contrary to those of a study undertaken by Amuda & Domiya (2016) study which established that parents' level of education was not a significant predictor of students' participation in education and academic performance. Munyalo (2017) also highlighted that there existed a positive relationship between parent's level of education and the student's participation in education. Those parents with higher levels of education appreciated the importance of their children's education and hence, were able to support their children to enroll and stay in school since they had better chances of getting opportunities to earn income, enabling them to pay school fees.

The correlation analysis demonstrated that the association between parental level of education and students' participation in learning activities was not only positive and strong, it was also significant. The regression analysis further affirmed that students' participation in public day secondary schools in Makueni County was positively and significantly influenced by parental level of education. Therefore, it can be argued enhanced parental level of education in these schools would considerably improve students' participation. These findings were consistent with the assertion by Onyedikachim and Ezekiel-Hart (2021) that parents' educational achievements were highly related with students' participation in learning in terms of school attendance and completion as well. The findings also concurred with Santhiyappan (2019) study which concluded that there exist a positive correlation between parents' educational level and the students' academic performance. Educated parents always had the right attitude towards education and provided the necessary learning materials, support, motivation and guidance that their children needed to stay focused in their studies. The findings also supported the finding by Muhammad (2015) that parents with high level of education to a greater extent had more influence on their children's participation and performance in school as they showed more interest and care in their children's academic attainments.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended that school administrators and local authorities should increase sensitization campaigns targeting to enlighten parents / guardians on the importance of education. It was also recommended that public day secondary schools should have a well- staffed guidance and counseling departments to sensitize students on the need for staying focused in learning.

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